

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20554

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

8 FEB 1993

IN REPLY REFER TO:

8310-MEA
CN9300264

RECEIVED

MAY - 4 1993

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Honorable Howell Heflin
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Heflin:

Thank you for your letter on behalf of several constituents who complain about rate increases by their local cable television operators.

The Commission has a clear understanding that Congress adopted the Cable Act

Congressional

CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING SYSTEM
01/28/93

LETTER REPORT

| CONTROL NO. | DATE RECEIVED | DATE OF CORRESP | DATE DUE | DATE DUE OLA(857) |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|----------|-------------------|
| 9300264 | 01/28/93 | 01/21/93 | 02/10/93 | |

| TITLE | MEMBERS NAME | REPLY FOR SIG OF |
|---------|---------------|------------------|
| Senator | Howell Heflin | BC |

| CONSTITUENT'S NAME | SUBJECT |
|--------------------|---|
| several | inq. re: rate regulation & 92 Cable Act |

| REF TO | REF TO | REF TO | REF TO |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| MMB | Erf | C4I | |

| DATE | DATE | DATE | DATE |
|----------|---------|------|------|
| 01/28/93 | 1-28-93 | 1-28 | |

REMARKS:

28 JAN REC'D

HOWELL HEFLIN
ALABAMA

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0101

MMB
catv-rates
264

January 21, 1993

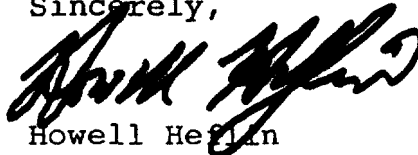
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Chairman
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I have enclosed letters from cable customers in Alabama who are upset about recent rate increases in advance of the imposition of regulations on April 1. I trust that you will be monitoring this situation very closely, and that you will take appropriate action to safeguard cable consumers from unreasonable rate increases. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

With kindest regards, I am

Sincerely,



Howell Heflin

HH/th

Enclosures

Jan 11, 1993

Honorable Senator Harrell Heflin

Dear Sir

I heard a lot about T.V. Cable Service during the last Congress. I wonder if any thing has ~~been~~ changed. My reason for asking, my bill from Comcast has jumped quite a bit. Jan 91 - was 15⁵⁵

Jan 92 19⁰⁵ Jan 93 20⁸⁰ I'm a Charter member. With a little smaller



MR. RUSSELL WATSON
2325 FARLEY PL.
BIRMINGHAM, AL 35226

To: *H. H*

From: *KW*

Senator

*Can't we get
legislation to freeze these*

nurses?

**up 71%*

last 6 yrs

[Signature]

SINGAPORE AIRLINES

n

RATE

OFFICE OF THE SENATOR
1992 OCT 21 11:26
SENATOR JEFF LYN

Basic Cable — \$19.00

Applicable franchise fees and taxes will apply to all services.

Prices for Other Services

HBO - \$12.70

Showtime - \$11.20

Cinemax - \$11.70

Disney - \$11.20

Encore - \$1.50

Converter W/Remote - \$4.00

The Cable Guide - \$1.00

Expanded Basic - \$2.65

*** Reduced Rates are Available for Multiple Premium Services ***



TCI Cablevision of
Alabama, Inc.

We're taking television into tomorrow.

Alabama T.V. Cable, Inc.

Hoover/Vestavia/Riverchase 822-8731

Homewood 942-2922

Tarrant/Center Point 841-0492

Hueytown/Fairfield/

Midfield/Pleasant Grove 491-9303

Pricing, programming and packages are subject to change.

B293

Cable's Still A Great Buy.

Cable television is one of the best entertainment values your money can buy.

As a valued customer, we want to inform you of some changes to your cable service. In 1992, our costs for programming, technology, and general operating expenses have risen more than the increase in the cost of living. In 1993, we are adjusting our rates by the regional cost of living index, plus cost increases from program suppliers. This will enable us to continue bringing you the quality service and entertainment you value.

As you may know, Congress recently adopted legislation which extends greater regulation over cable television rates. The Federal Communications Commission is expected to adopt rate regulation guidelines and rules by mid 1993. Based on current information, we believe the rate adjustments we are taking are consistent with the provisions of the new law.

We regret we cannot yet answer all your questions on the new legislation until the FCC acts. We are committed to complying with the new rules — and doing all we can to make cable television programming and service even better.

Please refer to the back panel for the new rates and their effective date.

Notice to Customers

8795-5800

When the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) issued its new technical standards in 1992, it adopted regulations which require all cable television operators to establish a process for resolving complaints from customers about the quality of the television signals delivered and to notify customers of those procedures.

We are dedicated to providing quality cable television service to our customers and to assuring that each problem is immediately resolved to the customer's satisfaction. These customer service procedures, in addition to many other issues, are covered in material provided to you at the time of installation and generally annually after you've become a customer.

This notice summarizes some of the procedures that you need to know to help us resolve complaints you may have about the quality of the television signals delivered:

1. Our business office is open weekdays, except holidays, from 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and on Sat. from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. for customer visits and telephone calls. In addition, we can be reached by telephone 24 hours a day, every day of the year. Our telephone number is printed on your monthly bill.
2. When you call about a service problem during normal business hours, a Customer Service Representative (CSR) will attempt to determine the nature of the problem. If possible, the CSR will help you resolve the problem over the phone. If the problem cannot be resolved during the call, the CSR will schedule a Service Technician to visit your home, usually within 24 hours of the time of the call, excluding weekends and holidays. There is currently no charge for service calls if the problem is caused by our equipment. If our workload permits, the service call will be dispatched for same-day service.
3. If you call about a service problem outside of regular business hours, the call may be answered by a regional phone center, answering service or answering machine. Please leave both your home and work telephone numbers. When possible, a Service Technician will be dispatched right away to fix the problem. In all other cases, the regional phone center, answering service or answering machine will forward the information to our office. We will call you during normal business hours the next working day to resolve the matter.
4. Emergencies that affect signal quality such as fallen utility poles, violent storms or very cold weather may interfere with reception of cable service. We are committed to have one of our crews promptly correct an emergency situation. We pledge immediate response at any time if a large area of the system is experiencing technical difficulties.
5. Our CSR's and Technicians are trained and have the authority to do whatever is reasonably necessary to solve a customer's problem or initiate the solution, including replacement of any non-operating equipment in order to provide quality service.
6. We will maintain complaint records for at least a one-year period. In addition, those records will be available for inspection by the franchise authority or the FCC.

If you are unable to get a problem resolved to your satisfaction at the local level, you may write or call our State, Division or Corporate Customer Relations Specialist with concerns and complaints.

In addition, if you are not satisfied with our handling of your complaint, you may contact the local franchising authority. The address of the responsible officer for your franchising authority is noted on the back.

City Clerk
City of Vestavia Hills
513 Montgomery Hwy.
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216

City Clerk
City of Hoover
P.O. Box 360628
Hoover, AL 35236

We urge that you call us anytime you have questions or concerns about your service,

th

MEMORANDUM

TO: ANNE BERRY

FROM: VERNA

DATE: January 7, 1993

RE: RATES GOING UP ON CABLE BILLS

WHY ARE CABLE BILLS GOING UP IN THE SHOALS? NOTIFICATION WAS NOT

PATRICK J. LEAHY, VERMONT, CHAIRMAN

FRANK P. PRYOR, ARKANSAS
DAVID L. BOREN, OKLAHOMA
HOWELL HEFLIN, ALABAMA
TOM HARKIN, IOWA
KENT CONRAD, NORTH DAKOTA
WYCHE FOWLER, JR., GEORGIA
THOMAS A. DASCHLE,
SOUTH DAKOTA
MAX BAUCUS, MONTANA
J. ROBERT KERREY, NEBRASKA

RICHARD G. LUGAR, INDIANA
ROBERT DOLE, KANSAS
JESSE HELMS, NORTH CAROLINA
THAD COCHRAN, MISSISSIPPI
RUDY BOSCHWITZ, MINNESOTA
MITCH MCCONNELL, KENTUCKY
CHRISTOPHER S. "KIT" BOND,
MISSOURI
PETE WILSON, CALIFORNIA
SLADE GORTON, WASHINGTON

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6000

Dear Senators Heflin + Shelby,
Please vote "NO" on the cable TV bill. It will increase my monthly bills,
but I won't receive better service or more programs.

Name The Jacksons
Address 3913 St. Andrews E
Mobile, AL 36693

CABLE LETTER

Robert L. Clymer
28 St. Charles Square
Huntsville, AL 35801
4 January 1993

1993 JAN -7 PM 1:11
FICE OF SENATOR HEFLIN

1-2-93

Honorable Howell Hefner
Washington D.C.

Dear Sir:

enclosed find copy of letter
from TCI Cablevision of Ala. of my
increase effective Feb 1, 1993

This should not be then much
increase

a. 3.27 increase
per month for
basic service

Yours Truly

Cooper O'Barr
1853 Buttercup Drive
Birmingham, AL 35226

~~JAMES D~~

Important Rate Information

YOUR 1993 CABLE TV MONTHLY RATE
EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 1
WILL BE

Basic Cable — \$19.00

Applicable franchise fees and taxes will apply to all services.

Prices for Other Services

Cable's Still A Great Buy.

Cable television is one of the best entertainment values your money can buy.

As a valued customer, we want to inform you of some changes to your cable service. In 1992, our costs for programming, technology, and general operating expenses have risen more than the increase in the cost of living. In 1993, we are adjusting our rates by the regional cost of living index, plus cost increases from program suppliers. This will enable us to continue bringing you the quality service and entertainment you value.

As you may know, Congress recently adopted legislation which extends greater regulation over cable television rates. The Federal Communications Commission is expected to adopt rate regulation guidelines and rules by mid 1993. Based on current information, we believe the rate adjustments we are taking are consistent with the provisions of the new law.

We regret we cannot yet answer all your questions on the new legislation until the FCC acts. We are committed to complying with the new rules — and doing all we can to make cable television programming and service even better.

Please refer to the back panel for the new rates and their effective date.

OFFICE HRS. M-F, 8-6. SAT. 9-5. FOR
REPAIR, CALL 444-9306, OTHER
INQUIRIES, 822-8731. 24 HRS. A DAY.

| ACCOUNT NUMBER | SERVICE FROM | SERVICE TO | DATE DUE |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| 8795 58 004 0031059 | DECEMBER 27, 1992 | JANUARY 26, 1993 | 01/06/93 |
| DATE | SERVICE/TRANSACTION DESCRIPTION | AMOUNT | |
| 12/04 | PREVIOUS BALANCE | 23.50 | |
| | PAYMENT - THANK YOU | 23.50 CR | |
| | BASIC SERVICE | 18.10 | |
| | EXPANDED BASIC | 2.38 | |
| | NONADDRESSABLE CONVERTER | 1.90 | |
| | FRANCHISE FEE | 1.12 | |
| | **AMOUNT DUE** | \$23.50 | |

Handwritten calculations and notes:

~~18.10~~
~~2.38~~
~~4.10~~
~~24.75~~
~~25.80~~

2.65

26.77
23.50
3.27

19.00
2.65
4.60
1.12
26.77
23.50
3.27

increase

Handwritten calculations:
~~18.10~~
~~2.38~~
~~4.00~~
~~24.75~~
~~25.80~~
 2.65
 26.77
 23.50
 3.27

Handwritten calculations:
 19.00
 2.65
 4.00
 1.12
 26.77
 23.50
 3.27
 increase

PAYMENTS RECEIVED AFTER DECEMBER 17 ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS STATEMENT

| PREVIOUS BALANCE | - | PAYMENTS RECEIVED THANK YOU | + | CURRENT CHARGES | - | Other | + | OTHER CHARGES (SEE ABOVE) | + | TAX/FEE | = | AMOUNT DUE |
|------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|-----------------|---|-------|---|------------------------------|---|---------|---|------------|
| 23.50 | - | 23.50 | + | 22.38 | - | 0.00 | + | 0.00 | + | 1.12 | = | \$23.50 |

AN AMOUNT FOLLOWED BY A (CR) IS A CREDIT OR A CREDIT BALANCE

MEMORANDUM

TO: ANNE BERRY

FROM: VERNA

DATE: January 7, 1993

RE: RATES GOING UP ON CABLE BILLS

WHY ARE CABLE BILLS GOING UP IN THE SHOALS? NOTIFICATION WAS NOT GIVEN PRIOR TO SENDING THE BILL, AND NO EXPLANATION WHY THE INCREASE. THIS PERSON TRIED CALLING JIMMY BALLENTINE TO ASK THESE QUESTIONS BUT WAS NOT ABLE TO REACH HIM.

MS. DOROTHY BURNS
RT. 8- BOX 127
FLORENCE, AL 35630

CLYMER, R.

January 11, 1993

J. Sloan, General Manager
Better Vision Cable Company
P.O. Box 900
Roanoke, Alabama 36274

Mr. Sloan:

I am in receipt of your letter, not dated, advising me
of your latest rate increase.

Only a year or so ago, Better Vision Cable Company almost
doubled the cost of just basic service and now Better Vision

RECEIVED
JAN 13 1993
10:11:07

Like I said before, if I called every time that I had reception problems, I would be calling almost every day. I should not have to do this.

Mr. Sloan, I cannot understand why Better Vision cannot furnish their subscribers with a service that is decent... the subscribers are surely paying for it but we are not getting our money's worth.

All I have to say is, I can't understand how you, in good conscience, could write a letter like you did and expect people to believe it, except for the increase in the rate... we can believe that.

I could care less about getting the two "new" channels... cartoon network and sci-fi channels... all I want is a decent picture and sound on all of the channels that I do get, of which I pay dearly for.

I will tell you this. as of January 11, 1993. I will be

If you want to discuss this letter or any part of it, you can come to see me at my house as I am tired of calling and calling Better Vision's office when it should not be necessary to do so as often as I do...it is getting to be a joke.

Regards,

Eugene F. Blankenship
Eugene F. Blankenship
Route 1, Box 55-A
Roanoke, Alabama 36274

P.S.

I do hope that I will get a response from some or all of these folks that I am sending a copy of this letter... any help would appreciated to help put a stop to this rate gouging and get Better Vision to supply quality transmission and service like they are obligated to do.

CC/ENC.

James Cable Partners, Bloomfield Hill, Michigan
Congressman Glen Browder, Washington, D.C.
Senator Heflin, Washington, D.C.
Senator Shelby, Washington, D.C.
City Council Members, Roanoke, Alabama
City Clerk, Roanoke, Alabama
Mrs. Judy Stone, Executive Director, Alabama Public Television
Federal Communications Commission, Washington, D.C., Director
Consumer Protection Agency, Washington, D.C.
Consumer Protection Agency, State of Alabama
Better Business Bureau, Washington, D.C.
Better Business Bureau, Roanoke, Alabama

(Any of you folks "game" to "get your feet wet" with this?)

EAB

Better Vision Cable

P.O. Box 900
Roanoke, Alabama 36274

(205) 863-8112
1-800-239-5367

Dear Valued Customer,

As the General Manager of BetterVision Cable, I'd like to welcome you to an exciting new year of Cable Television! I'm looking forward to 1993 with confidence that it is going to be one of our best years yet! We're going to bring you more terrific programming and tremendous entertainment value.

As a result of system improvements, customer service enhancements and increased operational expenses such as postage, insurance, labor, utilities and most importantly programming, the following rates will apply effective January 1, 1993:

| | |
|--|---------|
| Basic Service (Channels 2-13) | \$19.60 |
| Value Package (Channels 19-41) | 4.15 |
| Additional Outlet | 3.50 |
| Manual Converter | 3.00 |
| Remote Converter | 4.00 |
| HBO Premium Service | 11.95 |
| Cinemax Premium Service | 9.95 |
| The Disney Channel Premium Service | 8.00 |

But be assured, even with this modest increase, cable television service will continue to be your best entertainment value. Please see the enclosed new channel line-up and rate card and keep it handy for future reference.

We at BetterVision are always striving to bring you the best in entertainment and educational programming. Effective January 1, 1993 all subscribers to Basic and Value Package will receive the new CARTOON NETWORK on channel 39 and SCI-FI CHANNEL on channel 41.

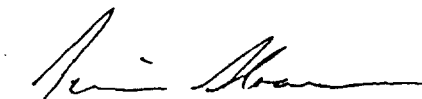
With the addition of the CARTOON NETWORK you will receive cartoon favorites from the Hanna-Barbera, MGM and Pre-1950 Warner Bros. libraries. We'll have some of the best cartoon characters on the air like Bugs Bunny, Popeye, The Flintstones, Yogi Bear and Tom & Jerry, just to name a few.

The SCI-FI CHANNEL brings you some of the greatest programming ever like E.T., Star Wars, Return of the Jedi, Batman, Home Alone, Ghostbusters and Terminator 2. With the SCI-FI CHANNEL you get a broad, but unique, identity, not only Science Fiction, but also Science Fact, Fantasy, Classic Serials, Animation and Horror.

As we previously reported to you, Congress recently adopted legislation which extends regulation over cable television rates, but provides us with no standards or guidance. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is expected to adopt guidelines and rules in a few months. This rate adjustment is in full compliance with the present law and Congress' instructions. When the FCC makes its guidelines known and effective, we will then make adjustments to our rates, if adjustments are required to meet those new standards.

I sincerely hope that you share our enthusiasm for the up-coming year as we renew our commitment to you — our customer. In 1993, we're going to give you the greatest entertainment, value and variety ever! Thanks for letting us serve you.

Sincerely,



Jim Sloan
General Manager

| ABLE CHANNEL | STATION | NETWORK | LOCATION |
|--------------|------------------------------|---------|------------|
| 2 | LOCAL CHANNEL | | |
| 3 | WTTO (21) | IND | BIRMINGHAM |
| 4 | WTBS (17) | IND | ATLANTA |
| 5 | WAGA (5) | CBS | ATLANTA |
| 6 | WBRC (6) | ABC | BIRMINGHAM |
| 7 | WCIO (7) | PBS | CHEAHA |
| 8 | WGN (9) | IND | CHICAGO |
| 9 | WSB (2) | ABC | ATLANTA |
| 10 | WJSU (40) | CBS | ANNISTON |
| 11 | WGNX (46) | IND | ATLANTA |
| 12 | WSFA (12) | NBC | MONTGOMERY |
| 13 | WVTM (13) | NBC | BIRMINGHAM |
| 14 | HBO | | |
| 15 | AMERICAN MOVIE CLASSICS | | |
| 16 | CINEMAX | | |
| 17 | ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION | | |
| 18 | DISNEY | | |
| 19 | NICKELODEON | | |
| 20 | USA | | |
| 21 | VH-1 | | |
| 22 | THE LEARNING CHANNEL | | |
| 23 | ESPN | | |
| 24 | CNN | | |
| 25 | THE NASHVILLE NETWORK | | |
| 26 | COUNTRY MUSIC TV | | |
| 27 | HEADLINE NEWS | | |
| 28 | TNT | | |
| 29 | DISCOVERY | | |
| 30 | ACTS | | |
| 31 | LIFETIME | | |
| 32 | MTV | | |
| 33 | THE FAMILY CHANNEL | | |
| 34 | THE WEATHER CHANNEL | | |
| 35 | ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT | | |
| 36 | QVC | | |
| 37 | BET | | |
| 38 | C-SPAN | | |
| 39 | CARTOON NETWORK | | |
| 40 | TRINITY BROADCASTING NETWORK | | |
| 41 | SCI-FI CHANNEL | | |

*PREMIUM SERVICE

Subscribing to either HBO, Cinemax or Disney will also give you Channels 15 and 17 FREE

Better Vision Cable

707 North Main Street
Roanoke, Alabama 36274

OFFICE OPEN 8:00 A.M. UNTIL 5:00 P.M. MONDAY-FRIDAY
CLOSED ON SATURDAY

PHONE 863-8112

1-800-239-5367

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| BASIC - CHNS 2-13 | \$19.60 |
| VALUE PACKAGE - CHNS 19-41 | 4.15 |
| ADDITIONAL OUTLET | 3.50 |
| MAN. CONVERTER | 3.00 |
| REMOTE CONVERTER | 4.00 |
| PREMIUM SERVICES | |
| HBO | 11.95 |
| CINEMAX | 9.95 |
| DISNEY | 8.00 |
| STANDARD INSTALLATION FEES | |
| INSTALL (NEW WIRE) | 50.00 |
| INSTALL (PRE-WIRED) | 30.00 |
| RECONNECT | 25.00 |
| RELOCATE OUTLET | 20.00 |
| ADD OUTLET | 20.00 |
| INSTALL PAY | 15.00 |